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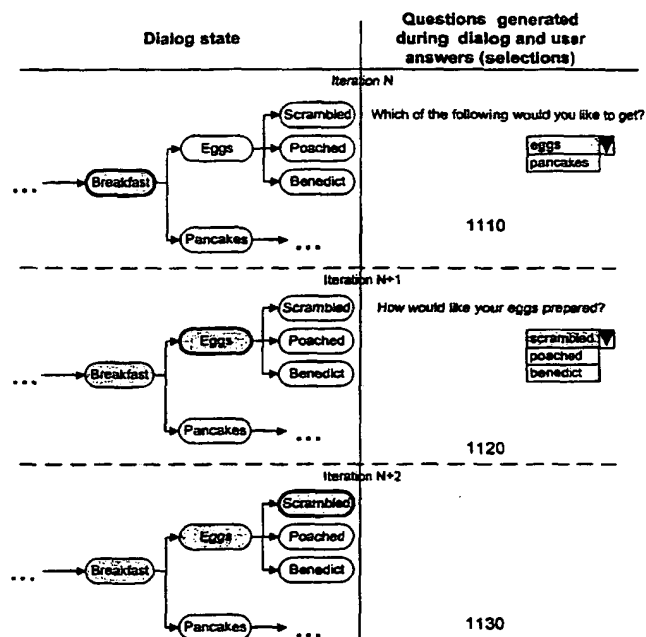
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING AN INTELLIGENT MULTI-STEP DIALOG WITH A USER



(57) Abstract: A method and system are disclosed for retrieving information through the use of a multi-stage interaction with a client to identify particular knowledge content associated with a knowledge map. The present invention is an application program running on a server accessed via the world-wide web or other data network using standard Internet protocols, a web browser and web server software. In addition to an automated portion, the present invention allows a human dialog designer to model the way the system elicits information, giving a human feel to the dialog and a better customer experience. In operation, users start a dialog by directing their web browser to a designated web page. This web page asks the user some initial questions that are then passed to a dialog engine. The dialog engine then applies its methods and algorithms to a knowledge map, using dialog control information and the user's responses to provide feedback to the user. The feedback may include follow-up questions, relevant documents, and instructions to the user (e.g., instructions to contact a human customer service representative). This dialog engine response is rendered as a web page and returned to the user's web browser. The user can then respond further to the follow-up

questions he or she is presented, and the cycle repeats. The invention can be implemented so that it can interact with customers through a wide variety of communication channels including the Internet, wireless devices (e.g., telephone, pager, etc.), handheld devices such as a Personal Data Assistant (PDA), email, and via a telephone where the automated system is delivered using an interactive voice response (IVR) and/or speech-recognition system.

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**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**  
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According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, INSPEC, WPI Data

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 878 423 A (ANDERSON DEWEY CHARLES ET AL) 2 March 1999 (1999-03-02) abstract; figures 2,4,6A,6B	1
X	US 5 377 103 A (LAMBERTI DONNA M ET AL) 27 December 1994 (1994-12-27) column 1, line 37 -column 6, line 26; claims; figures	1
X	US 5 895 466 A (GOLDBERG RANDY G ET AL) 20 April 1999 (1999-04-20) the whole document	1

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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